26. Salt. There was a considerable fall in the output of the pans during 1099, as a result of the intermittent rains during both the manufacturing seasons. The Public Works Department has completed the drainage works in the Rajakkamangalam and Colachel factories. Certain important works of improvement have also been executed to the Tamarakulam Extension Factory, No. II. The objects of these and other similar works were the securing of brine direct from the sea for the factories at Colachel and Rajakkamangalam and the prevention of percolation of fresh water in the pans and brine reservoirs of these and the Tamarakulam factories. These objects, I regret to say, have, however, not been adequately realised and the problem seems to need fresh examination. Moreover, in the Manakkudi lake, which is the source of brine supply to Tamarakulam, where the largest and most important factories exist, sea water can be got only during high tide, while, owing to the constant discharge of river water into the lake, the density of the brine in it is hardly even 1° B. as against the strength of 3° B. usually found in the Bombay factories. With a view to meet this difficulty, the Excise Commissioner has submitted a proposal for pumping brine direct from the sea to the Tamarakulam pans and the proposal is now under investigation by the Chief Engineer. As the licensees of the Tamarakulam factory are keen on the execution of this project and are willing to pay for the brine, the Government do not anticipate that the scheme will be unremunerative. It is hoped that the Chief Engineer will be in a position to submit a workable scheme at an early date.

27. Banking. The final orders of the Government are just issuing on the very important question of the formation of the State-aided Bank. In the allotment of shares, the Directorate has been instructed to give preference to Travancoreans ; and it has been decided to reduce the deposit to accompany the applications for shares from Rs. 10 to Rs. 5 per share. Since all the preliminary arrangements in connection with the scheme are now complete, it is hoped that there will be no further delay in the registration of this bank.

28. Savings Banks. The number of Anchal Offices doing savings bank business has risen from 44 to 73 during the last four years, the number of private transactions in them increasing from 14,457 to 47,615. The deposits have gone up from Rs. 18·39 lakhs to Rs. 22·85 lakhs, and the withdrawals from Rs. 17·06 lakhs to Rs. 21·19 lakhs. The minimum in regard to deposits and withdrawals has recently been reduced from half a rupee to quarter of a rupee with a view to enhance the usefulness of these institutions to the poorer classes of the population for whose benefit they are primarily intended.

29. State Life Insurance. Revised rules regarding the State Life Insurance were issued in 1099. Under the old rules, the premium was invariably fixed at 10 per cent. of the proposer's pay. The minimum rate of premium has now been reduced to 5 per cent. of the proposer's pay with option to bring up the sum to a maximum of Rs. 50 a month. Rules relating to the lapsing of policies and the conditions under which lapsed policies may be revived have been newly introduced. The scheme for opening a public branch of the State Life Insurance, which may be availed of by the non-official public, referred to in paragraph 39 of my address last year, is being sanctioned and it is so framed as to confer many substantial benefits on the public, and specially on the poorer sections thereof. To bring the scheme within the reach of the poor, the minimum for a policy has been fixed at the very small figure of Rs. 100 ; and in view of the comparatively low cost at which a State life insurance scheme can be successfully worked, the rates of premia are specially favourable. It is hoped that, in Travancore where the people are alive to the benefits of life insurance, the scheme will receive adequate encouragement.

30. Co-operation. It is gratifying to note that the co-operative movement, started in the country nearly a decade ago, is making rapid advance. The total number of societies rose from 477 at the close of 1095 to 757 at the close of 1099. Since then, mainly as the result of special propaganda work in flood-affected areas, the number of societies has increased to 830. Of the 757 societies registered up to

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